

Secretary
FCC
1919 M Street NW
Washington, DC.
20554

RM 9208

Comments in the Matter of Microbroadcasting

RM 9208 and 9242

Comments of Diane Imelda Fleming
AKA Condom Lady of Radio Mutiny
WPPR, 91.3 FM, Philadelphia, PA.

I, Diane Imelda Fleming AKA Condom Lady, file these comments on July 19, 1998, to address the issue of Microbroadcasting and Docket Numbers RM 9208 and 9242.

Greetings to all at the FCC, especially to Richard Lee, whom I met at the East Coast Microbroadcasters Conference in April of 1998.

Instead of using my alias, I have decided to write as a citizen and an activist. For seven years, I have been a counselor and educator in the fields of Reproductive Health and Addiction. Working in Methadone maintenance clinics and Cocaine treatment centers and with Syringe Exchange programs across the city has given me unique and valuable hands on experience with the people I was reaching out to with my radio show on Safer Sex and Harm Reduction.

Exercising my First Amendment rights to broadcast what I consider to be lifesaving information, was an honor for me and my duty as a citizen. I was aware of the legalities of our situation but decided that the health of my community took precedence over restrictive and unnecessary statutes. I grew up in the area in which Radio Mutiny

broadcast over. This is one of the neighborhoods in Philadelphia hardest hit by drugs, crime and poverty. Being silent about the devastation I have been witness to, through disease and addiction, was not an option.

My show was accessible to people with low literacy levels, who might easily be missed by street outreach, written ads or materials. I provided health care information and referrals to link people back into social, medical and detoxification services. Low literacy rates and alarmingly high rates of sexually transmitted diseases and injection drug users in Philadelphia validate the need for promotion of non-profit services (statistics are included on page 4). Radio outreach constitutes a preventive health care initiative. It is deplorable that the airtime reserved for non-profit announcements, usually comes when the public is asleep, between 12 and 6 AM.

I also feel that it is a violation of the civil rights of our people to withhold healthcare information or to keep it contained and in essence, hidden. The cost of neglecting the health of our people is far more expensive than reaching out to help in all ways possible.

I am asking that the FCC reconsider non-commercial community broadcasting to deregulate Microbroadcasting. Working together, with the Microbroadcasting community the FCC could create a realistic and fair system, that takes into consideration the needs of low income people. Deregulation is not competition if the focus of a station is people, not profit. It is imperative that low income people have affordable access to the airwaves. When this matter is dealt with fairly, the FCC can be free to focus on truly serious issues.

Many city wide groups and culturally diverse neighborhood organizations

committed to positive social change would like the chance to utilize the airwaves for the common good and the health of our citizens without risking outrageous fines and imprisonment. We want to bring humanity back into radio. We have had support from labor organizers, disability rights lobbyists, civil rights activists and health care advocacy groups.

I am including some statistical information about my target population that you may wish to consider in your decisions around Microbroadcasting and it's usefulness in serving our communities.

According to the governments own National Literacy Survey, over 25 million adults cannot read. Thirteen percent of all 17 year olds are functionally illiterate and among minority youth, the figure is 44%.

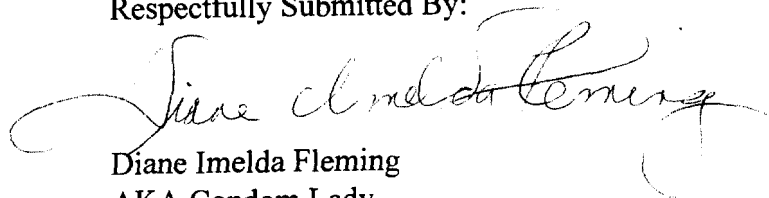
The Centers for Disease Control estimate there are 55,000 injection drug users in the Philadelphia and surrounding areas.

Philadelphia ranks number eight in metropolitan statistics of reported AIDS cases. The latest numbers according to the Centers for Disease Control are 14,803 people infected with AIDS and inestimable numbers of people are HIV positive.

The Philadelphia Health Department states that during a three month period, January of 1998 to March of 1998, there were 2,909 cases of chlamydia reported. During the same time period there were 1,633 cases of gonorrhea reported and 235 cases of syphilis reported. Each of these preventable sexually transmitted diseases leaves people more susceptible to contracting the HIV or Hepatitis viruses.

I believe that we can work together to reach an agreement that we can all be comfortable with for restructuring access to the airwaves for positive change. I am willing to act as a liaison to help further dialogue between our groups as there is common ground to be discovered. I can be reached through Stephan Pressor of the American Civil Liberties Union, if you would like to discuss this matter further, in private or in public.

Respectfully Submitted By:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Diane Imelda Fleming". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Diane Imelda Fleming
AKA Condom Lady
2539 East Boston Street
Philadelphia, PA. 19125
July 19, 1998

Stephan Pressor
ACLU
P.O. BOX 1161
Philadelphia, PA. 19105-1161
(215) 592-1513 ext. 216